

SEEKING HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: ACCESS, EQUITY, & OPPORTUNITY

Before traveling abroad, I assumed the overall educational system in the Dominican Republic was underdeveloped due to lack of resources. However, those with the means of transportation and funds can receive fairly great education, and those without, are unfortunately working the streets. I was very impressed with the curriculum for some schools in the D.R. Students were taught advanced courses at a young age and were challenged more than I was expecting. Not only were students learning, what we would call the *average* curriculum studying; math, history, science, etc. But students were also learning things they could use to their advantage in the real world such as sewing, mechanics, 3D printing, creating software and engineering. I noticed that students tend to learn at a faster pace so when it's time to graduate from high school, they are considered experts in their field/s.



Visiting the Dominican Republic, has opened my eyes tremendously as well as humbled me as a person. During this trip I was able to grow and do things I have never done before. I was faced with one of my biggest fears, flying, and with the support from the program directors and my fellow classmates, I was able to face those fears. After experiencing what it was like to be a citizen of Santiago, I've realized how fortunate I am living in the United States. Housed in a hotel, we still experienced things such as showering with cold water, warm water if we got lucky. Though showering with hot water may seem unimportant or minute, it made me appreciate the small things I am fortunate for. In the D.R., there were over thousands of people on the street both children and adults. They are offered some assistance with things such as showering and food. However, those living on the street return back to the streets at the end of the day because sadly, those places in the D.R. that try to help those on the street have very limited funding.



My favorite part about studying abroad was learning the history of Trujillo and the Mirabal sisters. Trujillo was a dictator who ruled the Dominican Republic for 31 years, also known as the bloodiest eras in the Americas, the Trujillo era. This time period is known to be a long era of oppression and death. Trujillo and his regime were responsible for many deaths, between 20,000 and 30,000 Haitians, in what is called the *infamous* Parsley massacre. The Mirabal sisters, *Las Hermanas Mirabal*: Patria, Minerva, María Teresa and DeDé opposed the dictatorship of Trujillo and were a part of clandestine activities that were against his regime. The bravery these sisters compelled was inspirational for both me and women in the Dominican Republic.



I chose to study abroad in hopes of comparing the educational system of the Dominican Republic versus the educational system of the United States. I also wanted to learn about the history and culture; perhaps enhance my Spanish speaking abilities.

